The Free Press Short Story

Irish Fodder for the Dunes

By DENNIS H. STOVELL

HAMUS O'NETLL hung his sand-slopes when the furze is the leave to over a rafter in bloom." the lean-to, flung his floppy straw hat on a peg before he went to the pump under the porch to draw a brimful basin of cold water. He fen, deer within her heart, doused his ruddy face and spluttered, Shamus was defending the cause. while Kitty, his sister, watched him uneasily from the kitchen door

"Something must be alling you, ly aligned himself with the "post Shamus O'Nelll," she 'timidly ventured. "Not n word have you said to me since coming through the gate." Shamus lerked victously at the "There is somethin' ailin' me. Kitty! I'm symmoned! will make a thorough investigation

Summoned, Shamus? thing have you done? This means you must appear before a district meding."

Her brother pointed a calloused finger towards the undulating sand place and the sen. "It's those furzy hills!" he told her. "Neighbors are complainin'-fearful that the gorse, whose first seed our father brought from Ireland, may spread wild and cause a plague, an Irish plague, Kitty, such as were the anakes of Saint Valentine! A petition has gone the rounds, declarin' it a public nuisance. Bein' such, it must be eradicated!"

"Erndlented?" questloned Kitty "Another harsh word."

"The same as extirpate," Shamu defined, "or exterminate. growing bush of it must be grubbed out and burned, root and branch That's why I'm summoned before the district meeting. Kitty-to hear the protests and give reason for the

"The fears of our neighbors are unfounded," the girl remarked. "There can be no real harm in the furze. Father would not have brought the seed from the hills of Connaught, and planted them 'in the warm sand of the dunes, to start a plague! There is somethin' else behind all this fuss! It's cheap politics, Kitty! Young Ben Weaver, once a common farmer the same as I, is now a pest eradictor. Kitty. with an office, down at the county

"Ben Weaver!" Kitty gasped, in quick surprise. "You have him wrong, this early hour. I'm out here in the Shamus! Ben would take no willing hand in a neighborhood dispute, nor is he a pest eradicator; he's an agricultural agent--"

Shamus cut in. "The main busines." of an agricultural agent, so it seems, of it," brought in Kitty. "He was is to eradicate posts, real or imag- summoned to the district meeting inary; hence Ben, to be officious in last night." She carefully measured

She liked Ben Weaver. Her brother abruptly dropped the table. Shamus O'Neill, being an O'Neill of the O'Neills, allowed noth- ingly. There is no other course for ever started a plague!" ... ing to interfere with his appetite.

knew. She was not expected to go. it. There is a possibility that your "See Shamus! He is out now, and Marguis with ability to resist rust. A Soon after supper he saddled a horse and rode out through the gate.

turned, going several times to the if I were allowed the use of it. for a it to our cows!" . . . ers. In the interval these-varietiesrelieved when she heard him-tide

old country " "You should not hold that against; answer a lot of troublesome questions of the house. Kitty, staring at the . Shrewsbury. England (CP) him," Kitty defended "He was oblig; as to whether the furze has any window, saw him digging and claw-, Credited personally with 22 Nazi. ed to proside being the county acent actual value" whose duty it is to direct such in; "It is a precious thing," Kitty fal burned green plants, which he flatled; R.A.F., has been awarded a bar for

know the ways an' habits of the plant cator! When I need you-I'll give from the O'Neill dunes. . . to-morrow night " Shamus asked as much or more than I. At least he the order! Out you go:" should be aware that it is no jest. Kitty tugged at his arm! "Shamus! Kitty's hand. Ben Weaver himself ed," grinned the visitor. "I am give-An' I told him, quite plain, that an Shamus! You are an O'Neill! You returned it, and in the presence of ing you your summons now, Shamus O'Neill of the O'Neills never was can at least be kind!" known to spread a plague. As for "An O'Neill of the O'Neills!" but having kept it so long. "There was there to thank you, and your father, my part, not one root of it will I aighting brother rectified. He pushed much to learn from its carefully for the Irish fodder!" grub out! Father himself planted her aside, and pointed again to the written pages," he explained. "Your, Shamus O'Neill, with pleasantly the seed upon the dunes, when you gate, repeating his command: "You father was a botanist, as well as a twinkling blue eyes, got into his Macan' I. Kitty, were toddlin' youngsters. go i'm tellin you!" He an' Mother, heaven bless their | Ren Weaver put on his hat. The "An O'Neill of the 'O'Neills!" way and passed her a sly wink. "I'm souls, passed on to the Better Coun- color left his face for a tense moment | Shamus interrupted. "Being such, he summoned to the barn just now- and try before they were to witness the and his thin lips were tightly drawn, could not start a plague!"

The fervor and the unflinching ardor of her fighting brother, aroused every fibre of Kitty's being. The girl her own kin and kind; yet she could not believe Ben Weaver had purpose;

"He being an agricultural agent puts Ber in position to actually help us in this trouble, shamus, she at tempted-to-explain. "I'm certain be before he offers any recommendation to the county court. He will kno

"The truth! The truth!" Shamos exclaimed, raising both his hands. "What did I do last night but blm the truth? Aye, Kitty, he will billows which lay between their little not forget! And listen to me! I've seen-enough-of-that-pest-oradicator. Twill be better for him to keep clear of the dunes-or at least that portion owned and ruled by the O'Neills."

Kitty shook her blond curls. He eyes, too; were flaming. "You mean the O'Neill of the O'Neills?" she cor-

"As you like, my pretty sister!" re-"But remember torted Shamus. there's to be none of that young Weaver around here--from now on! Kitty - made no promise, and.

Shamus tramped from the house. brightly-polished breakfast dishes on the kitchen shelf when she heard motor car draw, up to the gate. proment later she heard a knock on the door. Motor cars and visitors did not often come to the little house the O'Nellls' among the dunes. often 'dld they arrive this early

day. Timidly, Kitty opened the door A surprised gasp came from lins. A good-looking young man, atfired in the nent-fitting service andform of a county agricultural agent, stood on the porch. He raised his hat and smiled.

"Ben -- Mr., Weaver!" stammered

"You had it right on the first word Kitty," spoke the caller pleasantly. "I beg your pardon for intruding at dunes, to make an inspection of the furze that is spreading over the sand hills, and about which there is some complaint. You probably know some

"My brother, Shamus, has told me these parts, must have a whack at her words, fearful of incriminating tter tighting brother. After all, she Shamus might have said more, bu! was an O'Neill, and she was in doubt

in the field :

was aroused she readily surmised by the dunes! He knew it well, the furze!"

golden glory that now covers the 'Very well," he said quietly, "I'll go! "He scattered a great blessing Ben!"

Cut Crops Soon in Canada's Big

old horsehair trunk to weep biller tears. The time had come to make Research Experts Reap Harvest ready the mounday ment when she for Ideas on Promotion and rose. Her eyes were dry and glowing Perfection of Wartime with a resolute purpose. "I, too, am m O'Noill!" she muttered as she Production brought the little brown book from

its place in the trunk. Before she started the dinner fire in the kitchen stove, "she carefully wrapped the sook, penned an address to Ben Wenver, county agent, applied

spring and, the summer, the subject summer, a varied crop of grain Shamus wanted to forget the disagreeable affair that had becoitbe bane upon their penceful existence. As much as he could, he kept from Killy, any report of the continued

necessary stamps and posted the

onckage in the mail box.

Am sorry to have caused you this anpoyance." He gave Kitty a parting

She sought the seclusion of her

room, flinging herself down by the

smile as he turned from the porch.

The summer deepened into and-the-fall-labbat-into-winter-an no direct message came to Kitty O'Neill. Ben Wenver failed to acknowledge Veceipt of the little rown book, leaving its sender to guess whether or not it safely reached his

Due to a prolonged drouth, crops ell short. Shamus stored less than half the usual quantity of have and silage for his milk cows. Neighbors fared no better. Following the No vember rains, came days of sodden cold, with freezing mists then snow and biting winds from out of the north. For weeks the dunes lay under a mantle of white.

Shamus cleared a trail from the house to the barn, and kept his cows in the shed. The day came when but seant-feed was left in the mow. Throughout the sand hill country. prevalled. Cattle were slowly starying. Some farmers, whose haylofts harley were tested and finally one were empty, turned their herds into European variety was found most re the open, to browse on pungent Kitty was placing the last of the spruce and acrid hurel. This, they reasoned, was better than to let the poor beasts starve in the stalls.

"Which goes to show what little the hill. use is a county agent!" grumbled Shamus on a cold day in February, tion of flax with larger seeds and so heating stove in their tiny-sitting and to determine the cause and cure room. Shamus wazed through the of a disease called "grey fleck" in frosted_windowpanes_over the snow- oats are in progress. covered dunes. "What good is a pest eradicator?" he wanted to know.

-Kitty O'Neill was in no moul to answer. Heartsore and hopeful, her eves were held\ on the road. Few rigs of any sort passed over it during these days of endless white. She saw the gaunt cattle gnawing the dead cornstalks in the flelds.

"It's an awful thing that those poor creatures should starve!" muttered Shamus, his face to the window. "The complaining ones who feared furze would become a plague have now something else to worry about At this hour of famine, it is the only thriving plant upon the dunes. blessed shrub, it ought to be." muse abrufftly ended when Kitty

seized his arm. "Look! Shamus! A wagon londed with men coming along the road!" Empire. Shamus growled: "Sure I see

"Kitty's comely features. .. He was Why had Ben Weaver come to the ing! I'm to be summoned again! tral Experimental Farm here, made touching a tender spot he well knew, house instead of going to Shamus out There's to be another district meeting the wheat growing area populous and at the schoolhouse, to-morrow night prosperous but in time it proved "I am genuinely desirous of know- All the neighbors are bringing me overly susceptible to rust. This weaksubject of the offending furze and of ing the truth about the furze," frani:- word this time! "Beh Weaver will ness, along with other factors, dry the summons. 'He took his place ly declared the agent. "It is my duty preside" as before an' put me on the weather, grasshoppers and low prices silently at the welf-laden dinner to ascertain if it really is a pest, and grid. Once more will I tell him, contributed to the economic distress a public nuisance, and to act accord- Kitty, that no O'Neill of the O'Neills the wheat growing area suffered in

me. But I want the facts. Being Kitty jerked the sleeve of his heavy Plant-breeders went to work again Just what happened at the district a new plant for this country, we have woollen cont. "Ben Weaver is with and evolved several strains of when! meeting that night. Kitty never very little available data concerning the wagon yonder!" she ejaculated which combined the good qualities of and Shamus offered no invitation. father, who scattered the first seed, leading several of the others into the few years ago enough seed was availhad in his pessession som thing of a field! He is digging into the snow able of the varieties called "Thatchbotanical history concerning the and breaking off the furze! Now he er," .. "Regent," ... "Apex." .. had "Re-. She lay wide awake until he re furze. This would help me greatly, is flailing a branch of it and flinging nown," to start distribution to farm-

open window of her tiny bedroom; to time. I feel certain your father was Jubilantly, joyously, she jumped up have practically replaced Marquis peer into the velvety gloom She was well acquainted with the plant " and down and pounded her brother's! The result is the prairie farmer has "Indeed he was!" interposed Kitty broad back. "He's digging more one less natural hazard in his battle O'Neill. "Were the furze a past. Shamus! And flailing! Now the with the land and the weather for a-That her brother's fighting blood Father would not have seeded it upon cows, are eating it! They're eating fair-yielding crop. The new varieties

his heated utterances the next morn- loved the furze and wanted the gold- Shamus watched the strange pro- quis and so can be grown further; ing "I told 'ent a few things Kitty en glory of it on the hills. He wrote coedings in dumbfounded amazement," north. Thus their introduction has when they med their questions at move the whole story of the furz. He heard the hungry cattle bawling enlarged the area, in which highme!" Shamus reported, with indig- in a little brown book." She hest and saw scores of starving, 'bean-grade bread wheat can be produced nant wrath And I was right in my lated, afraid she had said too naid. flanked beasts come shambling over . Further efforts to improve on the contention that young Ben Weaver! That hitle brown notebook, with its the snow toward the feast that had rust-resistant wheat strains are o many materials. He present in a sure of timely and their later with party and for their Her two programs to Security that is a stable

senseless queries he shot at me . she kept with other precious articles - rhey're eating it! They're eating early-ripening, high yielding variety wantin' to know about the fuize, and 'in the frayed old horselian trunk. It! The cowscarc cating the furze!" known as "No . 417" in an effort, for how Father came to tetch it from the ""Could I have that thitle brew! He hurried into his Mackinaw, put on improve Thatcher's milling qualities "book" begged the agent "it taight his cap and mittens and rushed out" ing into the snow to uproof the planes, Pilot Officer E. S. Lock, of the tered "Never has it left our house" with a stout oak club, and flung to his Distinguished Flying Cross. "Which gave him no cheense to "And it is not leaving now!" cut in the lowing cattle, nor did he stop make or try to make an idiot of a stern voice from the lean-to with his own beasts. Word was sent ! me! If he's the smart one he pre- Shamus-tramped under the porch out to all the neighbors, or such as when he blanted the furze upon the tends to be, then why should be quest and faced the caller had no furze upon their own lands, dunes," declared Ben Weaver tion me about the furze? He should "No use have we for a pest cradi- to come and take all they needed "How about the district meeting

> The little brown book came back to "It will come to pass, as schedul-Shamus O'Neill made apology for O'Neill. All the neighbors will be

farmer - "

House Workers

gency Inspires Writer's Efforts

BY FRANK FLAHERTY Canadian Press Staff Writer

Ottawa, February 19th (CP) will soon be harvest time at the Central Experimental Farm. . winds howl over the fields but inside Through the remainder of the two large greenhouses in artificial nearing maturity. Wheat, oats, per flax, barley are growing under glass These are experimental crops

which the plant breeders are testing out various crosses of different varie ties in an effort to improve the type of cerest plants available to Canadia farmers. By using the greenhouse for plant breeding three crops a year can be harvested and more rapid progress made in cross-breeding, testing and multiplying the seed.

The midwinter crop includes cross between Thatcher wheat an No. 447 wheat, an effort to combin the good milling qualities of 447 wit the Thatcher's rust resistant quality Another cross-breed growing - is 'Vanguard' and "Urban" oats. -Vanguard is resistant to leaf rust and Urban to stem rust and Dr. L. H. SONS ACCUSED Nowman, Dominion-Gerealist, is looking for an oat registant to both dis-

· Fighting Mildew In recent years a disease called

mildew has been hitting barley crops in different parts of Canada. Ex- were placed on probation. perimental barley sowing in greenhouse are infected with mildew

sistant. This was crossed with som of the best Canadian varieties and I to determine which is likely to fill

Experiments looking to the evoluwhile he and Kitty hovered over the more suitable for milling purposes

> Meantime on the broad blains plant breeders have accompanied the second major revolution in wheat producing and rust-resistant varieties now are grown generally in the great area which was once subject to the blight of wheat rust.

Spread of these wheats to every nook and corner of the vast area; which includes pratically all of the three Prairie Provinces, except the south-western part of Saskatchewan and southern Alberta, took only a

Wheat Development

The first wheat revolution started wheat in the first decade of the present century. It was an early ripening variety, whose qualities made possible the development of the Prairies into the bread basket of the

'Marquis wheat, evolved through a

also mature a little earlier than Mar-

and directed the quiz. A hundred drawings made by her father's; hadd, shouted as Kitty had done. " ... ing Thatcher wheat with another

kinnw and mittens. He looked Kitty's for a time! You're stayin' to supper,

Saving Britain

Glass Acreages Their Great Importance in Emer-

Manchester, February 19th (CP) Johntaiv_women_workers.-at -times little organized but instinctively efficlent and helpful, are the salvation of many difficult situations in bombed England to-day. ... Along this line, one writer in The

Tunrdian says: "Kitchen workers, the their everyday aprons and overalls, their only uniform a W.V.A. (Women's Voluntary Service) initialled armiet, who have during the critical first days and nights, some of them throughout intense raids, staffed the shelters, brewing ten and cocoa by candlelight, with water they have had to make efforts to collect, often-on a coal fire the have built themselves, lave proved the members of their many-sided Germans Tried New Method emergency are of fundamental im-

For the time being wide issues and terms of reference are out of mind. large and continually growing numhers of homeless neighbors, hundred of them, are to be sheltered, given

London, February 19th (CP) woman was rebuked for smoking the assault to be launched by the when her two sons appeared in court on a charge of stealing coal. They

"Look at your fingers the way Lyou smoke," Magistrate Martha-Bath first enemy troops, were hurled Cosition of Women in Industry," in a search for a variety which can told the woman. "It would be better for you to buy coal with the money In all, 200 different varieties of you spend on cigarettes than send your sons to steal coal."

Pledge for War Savings

WAR 25 Years Ago

By The Canadian Press

Attack at Opening of Battle of Verdun — Erzerum Fell to Russian

hurriedly evacuated 25 years ago in odds. long but unsuccessful attack on the under the Grand Duke Nicholas, eapgreat fortress, strongest of the four tured the fortified Turkish city of defending the eastern frontier, of MOTHER BLAMED France, began February 21st, 1916. gether with 13,000 prisoners and

> assembling men and munitions for and supplies army under command of the German Crown Prince. French military authorities expected the usual 48-hour artillery bombaidment before the against the citadel, but the enem-

German guns, for a short period, haid down the most intense fire of the lore August 1st

car up to that time. It obliterated the first French lines, some 20 miles in front of the city, and broke up communication trenches . Fourteer German divisions were against three French territorial divi sions, who were holding the seve tween Brabant and Herbeboos French Stood Fast

By the night of February 22nd the fensive line covering Verdun. Her3 reinforcement's thrown into the battle drove the Germans back. The assnull, in three phases, continued until slupe, but the French put up a suc-Zerdun's civilian population was cessful defence against overwhelming

Erzerum, February 16th, 1916, to-For weeks the Germans had been great quantities of guns, munitions

CALL FOR WOMEN

London (City istry of Labor, said 500,000 women of Britain are needed for war work be

EE HIVE TO

GAREGIS

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Aunt Jemima PANCAKE FLOUR pks. 140 For Energy-Beehive CORN SYRUP 18c, 18c, 19c Old Colony MAPLE SYRUP 16-oz. btl. 25C

PANCAKE SYRUP 16-oz. bil. 17c

CARROLL'S SLICED SIDE

BACON 11b. 27c

Clover Leaf Red Cohoe SALMON

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SOAP FLAKES PEANUT BUTTER

3 lb. 19C ORANGES — Special, dozen 23c Juicy Navel

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CABBAGE :

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Large Fresh Firm Washed

LETTUCE - head 4 fer 10c CARROTS

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